

Islam's Prophet Muhammad as saying, "The upper hand (of giving) is better than the lower hand (at receiving)," as an encouragement to provide for those less fortunate.

"As Muslims, we are encouraged to work to improve the communities in which we live," said CAIR Communication Coordinator Rabiah Ahmed.

Ahmed cited a recently-conducted CAIR opinion survey showing that a majority of Americans said they would change their views about Islam and Muslims if they perceived that Muslims were more concerned about issues such as healthcare, education and the economy.

CAIR, America's largest Islamic civil liberties group, has 32 offices and chapters nationwide and in Canada. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

TRIBUTE TO DICK LAWLER

HON. SHERWOOD BOEHLERT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dick Lawler, a long-time friend, who after dedicating 35 years of his heart and soul to the field of journalism has reached one of life's greatest milestones, and will finally take his well-deserved retirement.

Dick is known by his peers as someone with an invigorating ability to reach people in a way that leaves a lasting positive impression. Evidence of such can be found in one of Dick's classic euphemisms, "If it were easy, everyone would do it." Those words speak volume to the character of this great man.

That said Mr. Speaker, if it were easy, everyone would have a loving wife, devoted children, and adoring grandchildren. Everyone would raise a family worthy of respect from their friends and peers.

If it were easy, everyone would devote themselves to their community. We would all find the time to help children, serve our neighbors, and make the community that raised us a better place to grow up in.

If it were easy we would all be passionate about our jobs and our professions. Our work would exhibit the enthusiasm we feel every day, and our patrons would recognize the joy we feel from serving them. We would become legends in our own time, and admired for our skills.

If it were easy, everyone would do it.

For over 35 years, Dick has been a consummate journalistic professional who has sought to further hone and craft his skills every day. He is a man who was dedicated to the pursuit of both truth and a good story. A man who sat with Henry Kissinger, Robert F. Kennedy, school children, and shopkeepers equally.

In his private life he has dedicated countless hours to raising funds for children's hospitals and improving our community. It is these good works that have truly endeared him to us. For many years, my wife and I have often been privileged to share the company of his family. From backyard barbecues to cheering on our hometown Utica Blue Sox with our fellow "bleacher bums," Dick and his wife Jackie have always been a treasured part of our lives.

Very little in life is easy, but Dick has always managed to approach life with a grace and simplicity that makes it seem effortless. As a journalist, a father, and a friend, Dick has spent the last 35 years tantalizing us with how easy life can seem when you work hard to reach your goals.

I wish him tremendous success in his retirement from journalism, I know all too well that it is never easy to leave your passion. And if it truly were that easy, everyone would do it.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STORMWATER ENFORCEMENT AND PERMITTING ACT OF 2006

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, as a homebuilder for over 35 years, I rise today in support of the Stormwater Enforcement and Permitting Act of 2006, a bill introduced by Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairman DUNCAN to streamline the Clean Water Act stormwater permitting process for residential construction sites.

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) costly, excessive, and inconsistent stormwater regulations need to be reformed to ensure affordable homes can be constructed without burdensome regulations that do little to protect the environment. More effective environmental protection will come from simple, straightforward rules that encourage compliance.

Stormwater is different from the industrial pollutants that are the focus of EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. Rain-fall events that generate stormwater runoff on residential construction sites cannot be controlled in the same way a manufacturing plant can control the flow of its industrial processes. The inflexible requirements imposed by the EPA do not acknowledge these differences. A more consistent and sensible enforcement approach would better protect our water resources without increasing housing costs.

I believe stormwater regulations must be reasonable, which is why I am an original co-sponsor of the Stormwater Enforcement and Permitting Act of 2006. This bill creates an outreach program to ensure all homebuilders know of EPA's regulations, gives builders an opportunity to correct benign stormwater permit deficiencies that do not result in environmental damage, and clarifies, codifies, and streamlines EPA's stormwater regulations for residential construction sites.

At a time when housing prices have hit record highs, burdensome regulations are pushing up the costs of housing, squeezing working families out of the market. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this bill forward to streamline EPA's stormwater regulations to ensure all Americans can realize the dream of homeowner-ship.

COLUMNIST DAVID IGNATIUS: IT'S TIME TO CONNECT GLOBALLY, ESPECIALLY WITH IRAN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce into the RECORD the commentary entitled "It's Time To Engage With Iran" written by David Ignatius and published in the May 25, 2006 issue of the Washington Post.

Much of the diplomacy of the last 5 years has been confrontational, characterized by threats, ultimatums and labeling or "name calling" of leaders or countries perceived as threats by the Bush administration.

With this threat diplomacy in mind, Mr. Ignatius offers some literary and policy advice. Quoting the last line of E.M. Forester's novel *Howards End*, Mr. Ignatius suggests "Only connect" as a good foreign policy for the United States.

Ignatius suggests only connect is a useful injection in thinking "about U.S. strategy toward Iran and the wider conflicts between the West and the Muslim world." I agree.

The U.S. could certainly have benefited from connections with our traditional allies before we invaded Iraq. Instead President Bush and Vice President CHENEY unhelpfully labeled France, Germany and our other long-time and steadfast allies as "the old Europe." Unbelievably, for a time, otherwise reasonable and sane members of Congress and of the administration insisted on calling french fries, freedom fries.

The Bush administration's arrogance and hubris led the President and Vice President not merely to rebuff the countries who refused to let America lead them into war with Iraq but took every opportunity to disconnect from them. At every opportunity the Bush administration let our long-time friends know our connection with them did not matter. If they were not with us, they were against us. I believe there are those in Congress who regret the attitude represented by these words. Our "coalition of the willing" has few member countries left and those that are left have few soldiers fighting in Iraq.

During the first days of the Bush administration, the U.S. refused to meet with Iran at all. China finally convinced the U.S. to meet with Iran but when we did, our representatives sat in the conference room and announced the U.S. would not deal with Iran and then spoke no more. During the 1½ years we did not deal with Iran it forged ahead on its nuclear research and perhaps produced enriched plutonium. We just don't know.

Ignatius writes that "we are in the early stages of what the Centcom commander, Gen. John Abizaid, calls 'the first war of globalization, between openness and closed societies.'" General Abizaid's advice was to "expand openness and connection." According to Ignatius, General Abizaid called al-Qaeda "the military arm of the closed order." The extremist mullahs in Tehran are leaders of a closed order.

Ignatius writes that America's best strategy is connection and to play to its strengths, which he believes are the open exchange of ideas, backed up by unmatched military power.